

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): Method of thawing pieces of ice which contain protein-containing products and water, which comprises introducing the pieces of ice into a horizontal mixer, said horizontal mixer comprising at least one stirrer whose axis of rotation is arranged horizontally, heating the horizontal mixer and at the same time mixing the contents of the mixer to maintain the temperature of the contents of the mixer at a temperature which is less than 10°C above the melting point of the ice, whereby the pieces of ice are melted to form a liquid phase and during such melting, any floating pieces of ice are continually submerged in the liquefied phase and mixed with it.

2. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer is a disc mixer or ploughshare mixer.

3. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer has mixing elements which have internal heating.

4. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said horizontal mixer has wiping elements traveling around the wall thereof.

5. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein said protein-containing products are protein-containing products from natural biological sources or from a biological process.

6. (Canceled):

7. (Previously Presented): Method according to Claim 1, wherein the horizontal mixer is operated continuously.

8. (Canceled):

9. (Previously Presented): The Method according to Claim 1, wherein said temperature is maintained at less than 5°C above the melting point of the ice.